Public health: limitation of exposure of the general public to electromagnetic fields 0Hz-300GHz. Recommendation

1998/0166(CNS) - 27/05/1999 - Modified legislative proposal

In its amended proposal, the European Commission accepted 9 of the 17 amendments adopted by the European Parliament in its first reading. The main ones relate to: - the introduction of normative measures aimed at limiting the exposure of workers to electromagnetic fields; - the establishment of a Community framework regarding exposure to electromagnetic fields with the objective of protecting the public via recommendations to the Member States (this Community framework should be based on existing scientific documentation and and be regularly re-evaluated); - the review of scientific knowledge in this field at regular intervals should also take account of research done in the widest possible range of research sources. The Commission provides for an exception regarding exposure for medical purposes where the risks and benefits of exposure, above the basic restrictions, must be properly weighed. The Commission, however, did not take up the Parliament's amendments in regard to: - the potentially dangerous effects of fields; - the respect for the precautionary principle so as to cover all eventual risks for public health; - the principle of a uniform method to measure conformity of products in the area of electromagnetic rays, - the maximum protection of the public where they live or where they pass most of their time, - the setting of minimum safety distances between certain electricity infrastructures and the public. Nor did the Commission agree with the amendments that sought to provide by 01.01.2000 for a new system of review of machinery generating electromagnetic fields, as well as for a comparative list of the limites applies in the Member States. it also rejected any possibility of harmonisation in the area via, for example, the drawing up of Community safety criteria for electrical equipment likely to produce electromagnetic fields. Lastly, the amendment seeking to review the proposal before 2001 was also rejected.